

Application No.: 10/764618
Amendment dated: December 19, 2005
Reply to Office action of 09/29/2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1, has been amended for better form, and to make it clear that it is not essential for the embedded portions of the fibers to be porous. More importantly, however, claim 1 now recites a characterizing feature of the invention, namely, that the protruding portions of the fibers have pores "capable of drawing in water by capillary action." It is especially the last-mentioned feature that distinguishes the invention from Inoue and Dutt.

As pointed out in Dutt, the value of previous chemical treatments of papermachine "clothing" was limited by the "ability of the textile fabric of the clothing to retain the chemicals administered in the fabric treatment." Dutt uses porosity in his fibers to retain treating chemicals, and it is conceivable that Inoue's fibers might be made porous for the purpose of chemical retention, following the teachings of Dutt. However, if Inoue's fibers were made porous, and treating chemicals were absorbed in the pores, the pores would not be expected to be able to draw in water. Thus, even if the teachings of Inoue and Dutt were combined, the result would not correspond to the transfer belt as defined in claim 1.

Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the belt is "ready for use in the press part." The inclusion of the term "ready for use in the press part" precludes a reading of the claim on an intermediate product, arrived at by combining the teachings of Inoue and Dutt, in which the protruding fibers are porous because they have not yet been treated by chemical treating agents.

New dependent claim 11 adds the limitation that the embedded portions of the fibers "also have pores," and that

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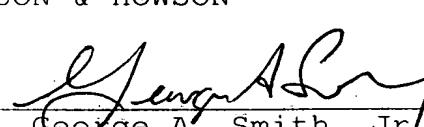
the "fibers are firmly anchored in the wet paper web side layer by entry of elastic material of said wet paper web side layer into pores of said embedded portions." Just as water would not be expected to enter pores of the protruding portions of the fibers when the pores have absorbed treating chemicals, elastic material would not be expected to enter pores of the embedded parts of the fibers if the pores had already absorbed treating chemicals. Thus, claim 11 also distinguishes the Applicant's invention from Inoue and Dutt for a reason similar to, but independent of, the reason advanced in support of the amended version of claim 1.

New claims 12-15 are similar to claims 1 and 9-11, but are directed to a closed draw papermaking machine in which the belt is incorporated. As noted previously, the term "ready for use. . ." precludes a reading of claim 1 on an intermediate product produced by following the teachings of Inoue and Dutt. The positive recitation of the closed draw papermaking machine as an element of the claimed combination in claims 12-15 also precludes a reading of these claims on an intermediate product.

The applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the presently pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
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